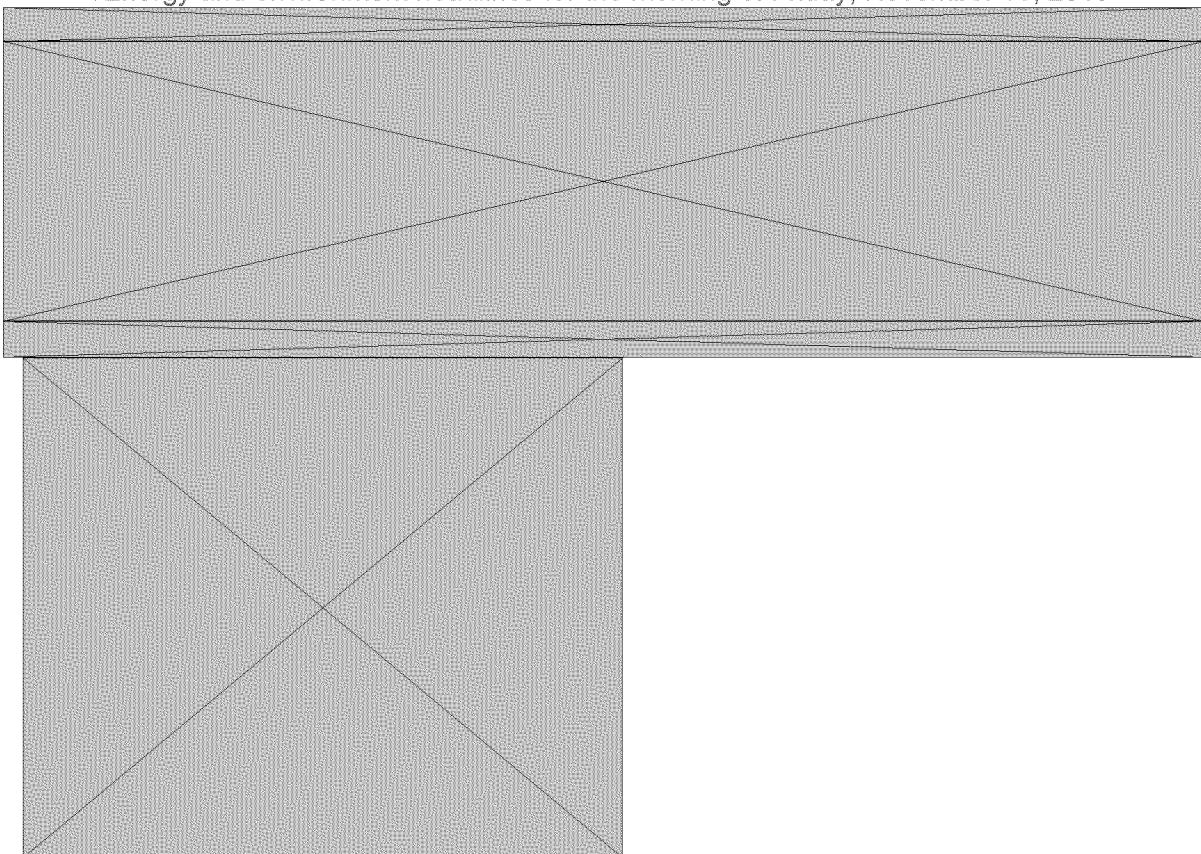


To: Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
From: EnergyGuardian
Sent: Fri 11/13/2015 12:25:11 PM
Subject: Ethanol lobby presses Kerry to bring RFS to Paris

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Energy and environment headlines for the morning of Friday, November 13, 2015



Ethanol lobby presses Kerry to bring RFS to Paris

By Kevin Rogers

The ethanol industry is pressing the Obama administration to pitch the Renewable Fuel Standard at the United Nations climate talks in Paris later this month, telling Secretary of State John Kerry that it remains America's "best kept climate policy secret."

In a [letter](#) to Kerry, made public on Thursday, Renewable Fuels Association President and CEO Bob Dinneen criticized the administration for failing to include the biofuels blending policy as part of its national commitment ahead of the talks. He also submitted a [report](#) highlighting the climate benefits of the policy.

"The U.S. failed to mention the RFS in its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) submission to the United Nations earlier this year," he wrote. "Indeed, there was no mention of the role of biofuels in helping the U.S. drive down GHG emissions at all. That stands in stark contrast to 28 other nations around the globe that did cite their aggressive biofuels policies in their INDC submissions."

Dinneen argued that the U.S. could tout the program, which sets yearly mandates for how much biofuel must be blended into transportation fuels, to inspire other nations to take up similar programs, and help drive investment in the biofuels industry.

He said that the RFS and biofuel use has been responsible for cutting 232 million metric tons of carbon equivalent since 2007, based on Argonne National Laboratory data.

"I ask that you encourage other nations to follow the lead of the United States, which has the single most effective and aggressive low carbon fuels program the world has to offer – and it has been a phenomenal success," he said.

The State Department didn't respond to a request for comment on the letter.

The U.S. has pledged to cut its carbon emissions by 2025 by between 26 and 28 percent, compared with 2005 levels. In the INDC, the administration touted power plant carbon regulations, oil and gas methane reductions, fuel efficiency standards, hydrofluorocarbon reductions, and efficiency programs.

The negotiations seek to strike a deal that would cut emissions enough to prevent average global temperatures from rising 2 percent about pre-industrial levels, the point where scientists say the worst impacts of climate change may be irreversible. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change projects that the world could hit that mark by 2050, absent global action.

Dinneen's letter comes as the Environmental Protection Agency, which oversees the program, works to finalize three years' worth of the RFS by November 30, the same day the Paris talks kick off.

The agency will release its delayed requirements for 2014 and 2015 and also finalize its 2016 levels in an effort to get the stalled program back on track.

In proposing the rules, EPA for the first time proposed using a waiver authority to keep blending below statutory levels, a move supported by the oil industry and refiners, but decried by ethanol and biofuel manufacturers, who said it would undercut investment.

The rules are currently under final review by the White House Office of Management and Budget, and interest groups are moving to make their final pitches on the regulations.

OMB met with Valero Energy Corporation on Tuesday, and in the coming days, the

American Fuels and Petrochemical Manufacturers, Biogas Researchers, the Renewable Fuels Association, the National Biodiesel Board and Fuels American will attend meetings

Dinneen's argument for the climate benefits of ethanol is key to the ongoing debate on the RFS. It has been disputed by some academics and environmental groups, who say that ethanol hasn't lived up to its carbon reduction potential. The Environmental Working Group, for example, contends that on a lifecycle basis, corn ethanol produces more emissions than straight gasoline.

Those battles are also being waged over the airwaves in the final weeks of deliberations on the program.

Smarter Fuel Future, a group opposed to the RFS, has highlighted environmental concerns in an ad campaign, citing scientists and climate activists, including former Vice President Al Gore, on the climate shortcomings of ethanol.

But Americans for Energy Security & Innovation, a group run by former Sen. Jim Talent, R-Mo., has a rival ad campaign out accusing Obama of being a "hypocrite" for "taunting" the RFS as it pushes for emissions reductions in Paris.

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Upcoming Events

Court rules EPA leader must give deposition in coal case

By The Associated Press

WHEELING, W.Va. (AP) — A federal judge has ruled U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Gina McCarthy must give a deposition in a lawsuit over the impact of regulations on jobs.

U.S. District Judge John Preston Bailey in Wheeling, West Virginia, wrote Thursday that there's no viable alternative to deposing McCarthy in top coal producer Murray Energy's lawsuit.

EPA spokeswoman Melissa J. Harrison said in an email late Thursday that the agency disagrees with the judge's decision. Harrison said the company has not shown that McCarthy "has unique knowledge essential to their case or that the information they seek is unavailable from other sources."

In the lawsuit, Murray asserts the EPA has shirked its obligation to conduct job-loss analyses on Clean Air Act regulations.

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Colorado disputes key part of EPA mine spill report

By Dan Elliott

DENVER (AP) — Colorado officials say they didn't endorse an Environmental Protection Agency cleanup operation that caused a massive spill of toxic wastewater from an inactive mine, disputing a key claim by federal agencies that state experts signed off on the plan.

State officials neither approved nor disapproved of the operation, according to a Sept. 2 letter to the EPA from Mike King, executive director of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. The Associated Press obtained the letter through an open records request.

King's letter is a blow to the EPA's contention that outside technical experts supported its plan to push a drainage pipe through debris covering the entrance to the Gold King Mine in southwestern Colorado on Aug. 5. The debris gave way, unleashing a torrent of 3 million gallons of wastewater laden with heavy metals from inside the mine.

The letter also raises questions about an investigation of the spill by the federal Bureau of Reclamation, which claimed two mining experts from the state approved of the project. Some members of Congress have questioned whether the bureau's investigation was sufficiently independent. The bureau is part of the Interior Department and is separate from the EPA.

More

Senate bill would drop protections for wolves in 4 states

By John Flesher

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. (AP) — Two U.S. senators announced a renewed push Thursday to strip federal protection from gray wolves in the western Great Lakes region and Wyoming — and to prohibit courts from intervening in those states on the embattled predator's behalf.

Legislation introduced this week would order the Department of the Interior to reissue orders from 2011 and 2012 that dropped wolves in Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Wyoming from the endangered species list.

"After over 30 years of needed protection and professional pack population management, the wolf has made its comeback," said Sen. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, who sponsored the measure with fellow Republican John Barrasso of Wyoming. Similar legislation was introduced earlier this year in the House.

Wolves are well-established in the western Great Lakes and Northern Rockies after being shot, poisoned and trapped into near-extinction in the lower 48 states in the last century. Only a remnant pocket in northern Minnesota remained when the species was added to the

federal endangered list in 1974.

More

Climate Countdown: When is a warming treaty not a treaty?

By Seth Borenstein

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's the elephant in the negotiating room that few officials want to acknowledge: Whatever international deal comes out of Paris climate talks, it likely won't be a treaty that needs ratification by a reluctant Republican U.S. Congress.

That's not the only complication in Paris. China, the U.S. and India don't want the international community dictating their carbon dioxide emissions, but they do want to do something about ever escalating greenhouse gas levels and the rising temperatures they cause. So they have to come up with an agreement that doesn't dictate binding, internationally set targets or require U.S. Senate approval — and yet gets the job done. At least partly.

To do so, they must reach a pact that has as many twists and turns as a pretzel.

"It's a reality that the world is coming to grips with," former Vice President Al Gore said in an interview with The Associated Press on Monday. "The design of the Paris negotiation is really driven in large part by the desire to get an agreement that does not have to go through the treaty ratification process. It's all perfectly legal."

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WIPP: Final settlement on nuke violations yet to be inked

By Susan Montoya Bryan

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Disagreement over money and timing have stalled the signing of an agreement that would settle dozens of violations stemming from a radiation leak at the federal government's troubled nuclear waste repository in New Mexico, a state official told lawmakers Thursday.

Officials with the New Mexico Environment Department have been meeting with the U.S. Department of Energy and congressional staffers as negotiators work to finalize the settlement.

"The debate right now is how much money and over how much time," Jeff Kendall, the

Environment Department's general counsel, told members of the Legislature's Radioactive and Hazardous Materials Committee during a meeting in Santa Fe.

Kendall could not give lawmakers a timeframe but said officials are close to having the agreement finalized.

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A message from America's Natural Gas Alliance

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Wyoming GOP congresswoman retiring, Liz Cheney considers run

By Mead Gruver and Alan Fram

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — Wyoming Rep. Cynthia Lummis announced Thursday she will not seek re-election and former Vice President Dick Cheney's elder daughter, Liz Cheney, said she was seriously considering running for the seat.

Lummis is the only female member of the rebellious House Freedom Caucus and plans to finish her current term. She has easily won re-election since first winning Wyoming's lone spot in the U.S. House in 2008.

Cheney, a television news commentator, briefly challenged Wyoming U.S. Sen. Mike Enzi for last year's GOP nomination. She cited health issues in her family in bowing out of the race more than seven months before the primary.

Cheney and her family have been living in Jackson Hole, an expensive resort community in northwest Wyoming, since 2012.

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Navy gets OK for exercises, says little effect on orcas

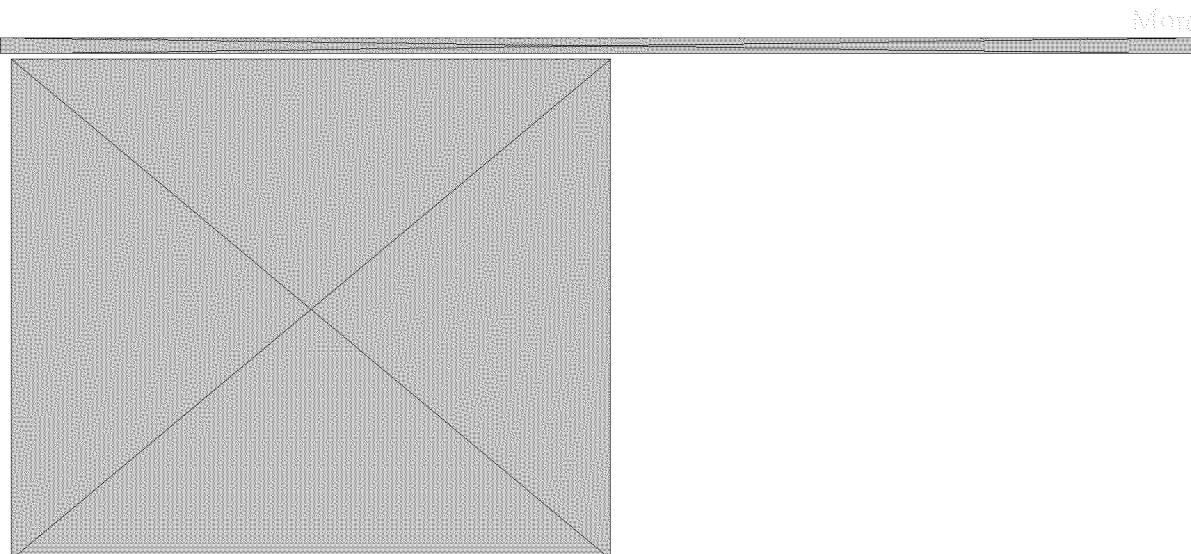
By Phuong Le

SEATTLE (AP) — The National Marine Fisheries Service said Thursday it has authorized the U.S. Navy's proposal to expand sonar testing and other warfare training off the Northwest coast, after determining the exercises would not have major impacts on endangered orcas and other marine mammals.

The Navy said the exercises are need to ensure its forces are ready for conflicts and noted that it has trained for decades in the area without significant effects on the animals.

"We're not saying that there's no impact," said John Mosher, Northwest environmental program manager for the U.S. Pacific Fleet. "We're saying that in most circumstances, they don't rise to the level of significant impacts. Most will be low-level disturbances."

The fisheries service renewed the Navy's five-year permit to conduct the activities in areas from the inland waters of Puget Sound in Washington state to the northern coast of California.



Boats sit idle as algae threatens Dungeness crab season

By Phuon Le, The Associated Press

San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf typically bustles this time of year as workers prepare to haul millions of pounds of Dungeness crab that are a tradition at Thanksgiving and other holiday meals.

But crab pots are sitting empty on docks, boats are idled and fishermen are anxiously waiting for California authorities to open the lucrative Dungeness crab season.

California has delayed the Nov. 15 start of its commercial crab season after finding dangerous levels of a toxin in crabs. Officials in Oregon and Washington are testing crab samples and will decide soon whether to open its coastal season by Dec. 1 as planned.

A massive bloom of microscopic algae — which produced a natural toxin called domoic acid that is harmful to wildlife and fish — in the Pacific Ocean is threatening the crab industry during a time when many fishing outfits make their most money. It's also roiling coastal tourism and marine ecosystems.

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Madrid sets parking, speed restrictions to control pollution

MADRID (AP) — Street parking for non-residents has been banned in central Madrid and speed limits reduced on access highways in a bid to reduce pollution levels that have left the city covered with a murky brown cap that can be seen from afar.

The town hall said Friday it was applying the restrictions after three days of excess levels of nitrogen dioxide.

It called on people to use public transport and said extra bus services were being provided.

The measures were decided on late Thursday and many drivers were caught by surprise on arriving in the city to find parking meters turned off.

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EIA reports ethanol production, stockpiles climbing

Energy Information Administration reports of a 13,000 barrel increase in ethanol production has brought the total to 982,000 barrels per day, the highest in 17 weeks, and stockpiles are growing as well, Platts reports.

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Rubio criticized by Iowa farm lobby for missing vote on water rule

GOP presidential candidate Marco Rubio may be biting in his criticism of the Environmental Protection Agency's new water rule, but the head of the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation has criticized him for skipping a Senate vote on a resolution against the measure, The Des Moines Register reports.

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IEA reports record glut of oil, prices poised for steep weekly drop

The International Energy Agency reported Friday a record 3 billion barrels of oil is stored worldwide, a supply glut likely to maintain downward pressure on crude prices. Brent oil in London rose 70 cents to \$44.76 a barrel in early Friday trading while U.S. crude gained 15 cents to just \$41.90 a barrel, but the benchmarks remained on track to lose as much as 5 percent on the week, Reuters reports.

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Local Louisiana officials end oil and gas suits

Ending a legal action filed in 2012, the Plaquemines Parish Council has voted to stop its pursuit of damages against oil and gas companies for damaging local wetlands, The Times-Picayune reports.

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Colonial Pipeline space a hot commodity

As the country's infrastructure has failed to keep pace with the energy boom, pipelines like the Colonial Pipeline running from Texas to New Jersey have hit capacity, making space on them a valuable commodity, The Wall Street Journal reports.

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Oil bust job losses ballooning in Texas

A fresh analysis from the Texas Alliance of Energy Producers warns that the state may end up losing as many as 56,000 jobs as a result of the crash in oil prices, substantially more than predicted earlier, FuelFix reports.

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PJM says it can handle peak demand for power this winter

PJM Interconnection says the capacity of nearly 46,000 megawatts in its system is 35 percent more than the grid operator estimates it should need to handle peak power demand this winter, Platts reports.

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Indian Point violates rules, says New York state

Saying that the Indian Point nuclear plant violates New York's rules around coastal management, the state's Department of State has filed an objection with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission about extending the facility's operating license, The Wall Street Journal reports.

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Petrobras trims 3Q loss on domestic fuel hikes

Increasing the cost of fuel domestically has helped Petrobras cope with its growing corruption scandal and a decline in the value of Brazil's currency. The company's billion dollar loss in the third quarter – calculated at current exchange rates – was nearly a third less than a year earlier, Bloomberg reports.

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Another Greenland glacier on the move

A University of California-Irvine researcher reports in the journal Science that a second Greenland glacier appears to be moving rapidly, likely because warm ocean water is reaching its base, and it could result in a foot and a-half of sea level rise, The Washington Post reports.

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Upcoming Events

- Nov. 13, Washington: The Heritage Foundation to host academics and an oil industry expert on the growing movement on college campuses to divest from fossil fuels and its potential impact. 12:00 pm , 214 Massachusetts Ave., NE.
- Nov. 13, Washington: Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz to speak at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace on the status of clean energy and the role that low-carbon sources will play in reaching a United Nations climate agreement. 2:30 am , 1779 Massachusetts Avenue NW.

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